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# *The* **STUDENT WRITER**

THE AUTHOR'S TRADE JOURNAL

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No. 5

## **The Greatest Fiction Market in the World**

By Arthur Chapman

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By Heather Landon

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*Outlines a Systematic Method For Evolving Story Ideas*

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By Frederick Palmer

## **Stumbling-Blocks of Authorship**

By James Knapp Reeve

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## THE STUDENT WRITER'S Literary Market Tips

*Gathered Monthly from Authoritative  
Sources*

THE regular quarterly publication of "The Handy Market List" will be a feature of the June STUDENT WRITER. Marked activity among the magazines, with consequent changes in addresses and general policy, has necessitated radical revision of the directory as published in March. Many new magazines will be included in the June directory. The information concerning rates paid by the various publications will be much more complete and accurate than was possible when this important detail was first included in the department at its last publication.

Readers who desire extra copies of the June issue are requested to send in their orders in advance, if possible. The extra demand for the March issue, at 15 cents a copy, was so heavy that it exhausted our reserve stock.

The promised directory of book publishers, with indication of their demands and methods of dealing with authors, is now tentatively scheduled for the July issue.

Correspondents have suggested that THE STUDENT WRITER should give space only to notices of magazines paying good rates for literary material. We would be in accord with this suggestion except that we believe close adherence to such a policy would limit the value of the department. It is well, we believe, to specify the magazines that do not pay for material, or that pay on an unsatisfactory basis, so that writers who do not wish to give their contributions away may be advised where not to submit them.

*Brief Stories*, 805 Drexel Building, Philadelphia, William H. Kofoed, editor, writes: "With the May number, *Brief Stories* is again increasing its size, this time from forty-eight to sixty-four pages, and we shall require more material than ever. Our requirements take in the complete, well-rounded, artistically handled story of 1000 to 3000 words." *Brief Stories* pays about  $\frac{2}{3}$  cent a word on acceptance for suitable material.

Arthur Howland, editor of the *National Pictorial Monthly*, 119 W. Fortieth Street, New York, in a recent address before the Writers' Club, gave his audience the impression that his magazine is not hard pressed for material at the present time. He said that he likes to receive letters from prospective contributors outlining the material they expect to submit, as most of his articles are writ-

ten to order by staff writers. His magazine, he stated, is at present in the market for a serial on the order of "The Genius" (written by Theodore Dreisser and suppressed). His staff members are always on the lookout for ideas and their fiction aims to show the romance of achievement.

*Popular Radio*, 9 East Fortieth Street, New York, Kendall Banning, editor, a new monthly magazine devoted entirely to the interests of radio fans, writes that it is in the market for articles of 500 to 3500 words, and anecdotes of 50 to 300 words dealing with the latest development and applications of radio, or of general interest and helpfulness to radio amateurs. Payment is on acceptance at varying rates.

*The Overland Monthly*, 257 Minna Street, San Francisco, is contemplating changes in general policy, according to Almira Guild McKeon, editor, who advises contributors to get in touch with the magazine after August or September. *The Overland* heretofore has favored Western material.

Walter Roberts has been made fiction editor of the MacFadden group of magazines, 119 W. Fortieth Street, New York, according to a correspondent, and these magazines, which include the *National Pictorial Monthly*, *Physical Culture*, and *True Stories*, will use more fiction than heretofore, it is stated.

*Fashionable Dress*, 250 Fourth Avenue, New York, Frances L. Scher, editor, sends the following specifications on material acceptable: "Articles on order only; short-stories, perhaps in the fall; editorials of interest to women; fiction with strong love interest, occasional sob stuff (but must have happy ending), acceptable now. Does not want jokes, skits, anecdotes or slang. Payment is on publication; rate depends on material and author."

*The Lyric West*, 1139 W. Twenty-seventh Street, Los Angeles, is a monthly magazine, exclusively devoted to verse. Grace Atherton Dennen, editor, writes: "We publish Western verse, also whatever has the germ of poetry, of any type. We do not care for comic or topical verse, or dialect, if too pronounced. Payment is made upon publication at the rate of \$5.00 per page of thirty-two lines. We offer a prize of \$100 for the best poem or group of poems published from January to January. We also publish editorials on verse and verse writers, 800 to 1000 words in length."

*Poetry* has moved from 543 Cass Street to 232 E. Erie Street, Chicago. Harriet Monroe, editor, states that the magazine is always in the market for verse, using no other material. Payment is made on publication at the rate of \$6 per page.

*Good Hardware* and *The Progressive Grocer*, Butterick Building, New York, are anxious to secure contributions in their fields. J. W. Greenberg, editor, writes: "We are continually in the market for material and pay from one cent a word up, on acceptance. We are particularly anxious that writers shall not get the notion that these are 'just another couple of trade magazines.' Both are run along the same lines that any first-class general magazine of general circulation is run."

*System*, Cass, Huron and Erie Streets, Chicago, requests that in articles which discuss business policies from the customer's point of view, the story shall be told in the first person, as if it were an actual experience of the writer.

So many letters were received from subscribers stating that they had submitted manuscripts to *The Nation's Voice*, Washington, D. C., in compliance with a call issued by the editor last December, and had since been unable to obtain a response from the editor, that THE STUDENT WRITER took up the matter with the post office department early this month. It was pointed out that the manuscripts submitted to the publication represented valuable property to their authors, and that it was unjust to keep them out of circulation. A courteous reply was received, to the effect that the chief post office inspector would at once look into the matter. During the past week before going to press, we have received word from a number of the authors stating that their manuscripts have been returned.

*Advertising and Selling*, 471 Fourth Avenue, New York, announces that it is in the market for 1000- to 1500-word articles on advertising and sales campaigns, paid for on publication. Only articles that will help men in their daily work are desired.

*The Boys and Girls Newspaper*, 35 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, is a daily syndicated newspaper feature. The editor states that he is in the market for "One Reel Yarns" of about 400 words, and verse of about thirty lines, of a nature that will interest boys and girls of from 10 to 16 years. Yarns are accepted at \$1.00 each, paid on publication. No rate for poems fixed as yet.

*Christie Film Company*, Los Angeles, Calif., Pat Dowling, publicity director, writes: "We are not in the market for scenarios from sources outside the studios. All manuscripts are returned unread, since our needs are best filled by our enlarged staff of regular writers who are trained for our particular work."

*Social Progress*, 205 Monroe Street, Chicago, Caroline Alden Huling, editor, writes: "We have accepted more matter than we can use for some time, expecting to enlarge the magazine, and we are returning many desirable contributions, otherwise acceptable. We shall not be in the market again for six months from this date unless an increased circulation enables us to make the contemplated enlargement."

*The Living Arts*, American address, 19 W. Forty-fourth Street, New York, is a new magazine launched by Conde Nast, publisher of *Vanity Fair*. It is edited and printed in Paris by Lucien Vogel,

elaborately illustrated, and the text is partly in English and partly in French. The magazine favors continental contributors.

*American Homes*, 205 W. Washington Street, Chicago, is a new magazine edited by Frank Parker Stockbridge and devoted to architecture and home decoration. Articles on these subjects, especially if illustrated, will receive consideration.

*People's Popular Monthly*, Des Moines, Iowa, states that it will not be in the market for manuscripts until September.

*The International Press Bureau*, 118 N. LaSalle Street, Chicago, states that it will not be in the market for material for some time to come.

*Fisk Club News*, Chicopee Falls, Mass., recently issued the following notice: "We have not issued the *Fisk Club News* during the winter and do not intend to publish it regularly for the next year. We have no use for material of any kind at the present time."

*The Drama*, 59 E. Van Buren Street, Chicago, Theodore Ballou Hinckley, editor, writes that it does not pay for contributions, but will collect royalties for the authors on all one act plays published. In addition to such plays, the magazine uses articles on the theater and the drama.

*The Los Angeles Times Illustrated Weekly Magazine*, published in conjunction with the *Los Angeles Times*, states that it is overstocked on material at the present time.

*The American Printer*, 239 W. Thirty-ninth Street, New York, uses news items relating to printing, news of press associations, new papers starting, changes of ownership, or new methods or machinery installed in printing plants. Checks are mailed at fair space rates once a month.

*Farm Boys and Girls Leader*, Des Moines, Iowa, uses inspirational stories and news items bearing on rural club work and farm boys' and girls' activities, buying a great deal of short matter. Payment is at about 1/2 cent a word on publication.

*The Watchword*, Dayton, Ohio, H. F. Shupe, editor, is in the market for short-stories of 1500 to 2400 words, written for young people and having moral and religious features predominating. It can also use occasional serials of six to ten chapters. Payment is on acceptance at \$2 to \$3 per story or chapter.

*The Commoner*, William Jennings Bryan's paper, published at Lincoln, Neb., states that it is publishing no outside contributions at the present time.

*Benzinger's Magazine*, 36 Barclay Street, New York City, a Catholic magazine, is now published quarterly and accepts no short stories, though it offers a limited field for novels.

*The Hay Rake*, Garland, Penn., Arch Bristow, editor, writes that no manuscripts will be accepted unless accompanied by \$2.00 cash for a year's subscription to the magazine.

(Continued on page 26)

# THE STUDENT WRITER

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## CHANCE FOR DISCUSSION IN JUNE CONTENTS

**J**ULIAN KILMAN'S unusual article, "Writing for the Two Million," will be a leading feature in the June STUDENT WRITER, in the mails and on newsstands May 25th. In his article, Mr. Kilman, author of popular stories, lays down a unique principle for success in fiction writing. He declares that he has discovered that the editors want only "one formula" yarns. The editors of the THE STUDENT WRITER will be interested in receiving opinions from others on the subject, after they have read the article.

The promised interview with Joseph Hergesheimer, obtained by Edwin Hunt Hoover, will appear in the June table of contents. It is full of suggestion for the average writer.

Further improvement in the quarterly "Handy Market List" will be evident when it appears next month.

Arthur Chapman's next "big author" interview will give readers a chance to get acquainted with Arthur Stringer and to learn something of his working methods. It is scheduled for an early issue, and reveals, among other things that the author of "The Prairie Wife" employs a system for gathering and filing material almost identical with one outlined by Professor Pitkin in the present issue.

H. Bedford-Jones, whose following is numbered by the hundreds of thousands, has written another striking article for us. It is based on personal experience and is entitled, "Making Your Library Pay Dividends." The article is one that probably will possess more practical significance for the professional writer than the novice—but the latter, too, can benefit from reading it. Bedford-Jones, you know, in addition to writing fiction and selling it at the rate of close to a million words a year, found time recently to tell how he does it in "The Fiction Business," issued from the STUDENT WRITER PRESS. He is the writers' "best bet" when it comes to handing out practical advice.

"A glimpse Into a Mystery Writer's Routine," is one of the fascinating articles held in stock for early publication. The mystery writer "glimpsed" is Herman Landon, author of "The Gray Phantom" and a long list of published mystery novels, serials, and short-stories. The article lays bare some of his working methods in a clear and interesting manner.

Chauncey Thomas has written a character istic discussion of "Stories That Live"—a "Campfire Talk" on writing. E. E. Harriman, regular contributor of boys' yarns to The Youth's Companion, has written an article telling how to get the "boy slant" in fiction. Frederick Palmer, screen authority; James Knapp Reeve, and other favorites can be counted upon for a lot of good stuff in the issues to come.

The next article in David Raffellock's valuable technical series, "Conscious Evolution and the Short-story," will appear in the June issue. It is entitled "Human Interest."



# The Greatest Fiction Market in the World

*How the Firm of Street & Smith Was Established,  
With a Survey of the Ideals Which Have  
Guided Its Destiny*

By Arthur Chapman

THE name of Street & Smith has been a familiar one to magazine writers and readers for almost three-quarters of a century. The firm is one of the few in the publishing business that are carried on today by the descendants of the founders. The business of Street & Smith is actively directed by two sons of Francis S. Smith, who, with Francis S. Street, in 1849 formed the long-enduring partnership which was to exercise such a remarkable influence on American literature.

Mr. Smith was employed on the *New York Daily Dispatch*. He had shown commendable business and journalistic judgment, and was high in the regard of the owner of the paper. The *Dispatch* published a weekly edition which was proving something of a problem. The owner tried in vain to make the weekly pay. Finally he said to Mr. Smith:

"I'll make you a present of the *Weekly Dispatch* if you want it. Perhaps you can make it pay. If you do, you can pay me any sum you think is fair, out of your profits."

The offer was made because the *Dispatch* owner had confidence in the resourcefulness of Mr. Smith. Also it offered a possible way of making a profitable sale of a losing publication. Mr. Smith did not look upon the *Weekly Dispatch* as a white elephant. He had a plan figured out, by which the publication might be made to pay. But he needed a partner in his enterprise, and said:

"If I can get Street to go in with me, I'll take the paper."

MR. STREET had acquired some local fame as a writer, both of prose and verse. While Mr. Smith's ideas ran more to business management than to the liter-

ary side of the publishing business, he too had done considerable writing. As events proved, both partners had an almost uncanny judgment in selecting the sort of material that would be popular. Mr. Street proved willing to engage in the publishing venture and the partners started out by changing the name of the *Dispatch* to the *New York Weekly*.

For a while the partners wrote most of the material that appeared in the weekly. They made it a story paper, and they wrote of love and adventure. The *New York Weekly* was a success from the start. The partners began to buy the work of well-known writers. Through the columns of the publication so strangely started, the writings of such authors as Mary J. Holmes, Charles Garvice, Effie Adelaide Rowland and a host of others reached their greatest audiences. The *New York Weekly* became a national institution and its stories were awaited with eager interest by readers in all parts of the country.

IT IS interesting to note that Messrs. Street and Smith seem to have been the first magazine publishers to see the possibilities of what is now generally known as the "Western story" which finds its highest expression in the work of Owen Wister. When "Buffalo Bill" Cody first came into prominence, the partners realized that if the adventures of the scout could be put into fiction form the result should prove interesting to lovers of adventure tales. Consequently they brought Cody to New York and had him write a series of stories which surpassed all expectations in the matter of popular appeal. Other writers of Western adventure were secured to keep pace with the popular demand for this sort of story—a demand which is stronger today than

ever. The tales of Ned Buntline and other adventure writers are still fresh in the minds of many gray-haired men.

These historical matters are sketched because they bear so directly on the publishing house of Street & Smith today. In the main, the idea of the founders of the publishing house are still followed—the purveying of stories which move quickly and abound in incident, but which are always clean. Ormond G. Smith is president of the firm, and George C. Smith is secretary and treasurer. The old *New York Weekly* no longer survives, but has been succeeded by several publications of different types, appealing to the differing tastes of the multitude of readers now reached by the Street & Smith magazines. The business is now carried on in a large and well-equipped building at Seventh Avenue and Fifteenth Street, New York.

The present list of Street & Smith publications is as follows:

*Popular*; a magazine of general class, using short-stories, novelettes, and serials.

*Ainslee's*; monthly. The story of the society type stands a good show here. Stories are not confined to that type, however. Uses short-stories and novelettes; no articles.

*Top Notch*; semimonthly. Sport stories stand best chance, but general themes are used. Plots should be strong. Serials should not run over 40,000 words, and novelettes should be 15,000 words or under.

*People's Story Magazine*; semimonthly. Stories of adventure preferred. Short-stories, novelettes and serials of usual length. Some rugged verse.

*Western Story*; weekly. Short-stories, novelettes and serials, dealing with the West of romance. Some verse and a few short, historical articles—but not cut-and-dried history.

*Detective Story*; weekly. Stories of mystery.

*Love Stories*. Just what its name indicates. Based on what might be termed the "old-fashioned" romance, happy ending and all.

*Sea Stories*. Also a self-explanatory title. A comparatively recent publication.

*Picture Play Magazine*; monthly. Mostly articles relating to the motion pictures.

**WRITERS** should send manuscript to the publication for which the story or article is best suited. If the editor cannot use the material but thinks it may have a chance elsewhere among the Street & Smith magazines, the story is referred to another editor. Thus a manuscript may be passed about, until several editors have examined it.

The "big name" bugaboo does not figure in the Street & Smith offices, to the detriment of the unknown writer. Editors are told to work "from the soil." Their main effort is to discover new and promising material. Many of the most famous authors in this country made their start in the Street & Smith publications. Not only did they make their start there but, in many cases, they are still "among those present," for attractive prices are made to those who can provide the sort of material which the editors want most. In general it may be said that when a new writer has "landed" steadily in Street & Smith publications—say half a dozen times or more—his value will be recognized in correspondingly increased prices.

**L**OUIS JOSEPH VANCE, one of the most popular of modern romancers, whose talk appeared in a recent issue of *THE STUDENT WRITER*, told the writer of this article that he considered writing for magazines of the Street & Smith type the very best apprenticeship which a young author could serve. Mr. Vance wrote a great deal for *The Popular*, when that magazine was started and when prices were far from being as attractive as they are today.

Not only have many distinguished writers in this country figured on Street & Smith title pages—and are still figuring there—but prominent English authors have secured their first recognition in that field. Among these is E. Phillips Oppenheim, who recently arrived in this country. Among the seventy novels written by this popular author, probably more than half have appeared in the so-called cheaper magazines. Some of them, in early days, were sold at prices which the author would not consider for a short-story today. But they helped him to find his public, which is the main thing.

It should be borne in mind by writers that nothing "off color" stands a chance with Street & Smith publications. This firm believes that the most successful stories, as well as the most successful plays, are built upon the foundation of clean romance. Stories may be alive with incident. They may even be tragic. So much the better if the love element is whole-hearted. But it is not believed that the public craves the erotic. If stories of an erotic type prove

popular, it is chiefly because under the surface there will be found the wellspring of real romance. Street & Smith prefer to keep that wellspring unpolluted, so far as they are concerned.

WHEN an author disposes of a manuscript to this firm, he sells all serial rights. This is really to his advantage, for the firm does not resell serial rights to newspapers. This refusal works to the benefit of authors generally. The sale of second serial rights has been much abused. In some instances newspapers have been known to get the second serial rights to novels for as low as \$5 apiece. This cannot fail to be a detriment to authorship. There is no reason why newspapers should not buy their own fiction at reasonable prices. This is a policy pursued very successfully by a few papers—notably the *Chicago Tribune*. It is a policy which makes newspapers a first-class fiction market, as they should be. If they are compelled to pay fair prices for fiction, it is felt that newspapers will value that feature more. As it is, with second serial rights hawked about at ridiculous prices, authors are deprived of what might be made a good market.

For the benefit of those who may figure on contributing to the fiction field which Street & Smith so notably represent, the words of one of their editors may be repeated:

"You would be astonished to know of the disasters that have come to well-known authors who have imagined that they could pick up some 'easy money' by dashing off

something for this market," he said. "We have requirements which such writers have found themselves absolutely unable to fill. One has to write earnestly and well, and above all, to believe what he writes, if he would do well with us."

The character of the Street & Smith publications has changed with public taste through the years. Magazines have been started along certain lines and have proved failures. They have been discontinued and others started in their stead. The firm believes in experimentation, which means progress. They have not been afraid to pioneer in the matter of price-fixing. *Ainslee's* was the first 15-cent magazine published. Advertising has not been made a fetish. Consequently the firm has not been compelled to reduce the size of its publications in times of financial stress. The subscriber pays the cost of the magazine, and something over, which is as it should be. The subscription price, if one stops to consider it, should be the basis of all publication profit, in the newspaper as well as magazine field. Then there would be no more talk of business-office domination.

Getting back to the editors of the Street & Smith publications, their chief aim seems to be to secure "regulars"—that is, contributors on whose work they can depend. If they can turn an occasional contributor into a "regular" it is a feat that tends to make the editorial staff sleep so much easier. Which is a most encouraging attitude, from the viewpoint of the author who has not "arrived" and who wants to know just how he stands in the editorial sanctums.

## What Happens Next

*How the Street & Smith Magazines Handle Submitted Material—Some "Close-ups" of the Editors*

By Heather Landon

*Recently With the Street & Smith Editorial Staff*

AFTER the author has hopefully dropped his manuscript in the mailbox, what happens when it reaches the offices of the Street & Smith Corporation, the largest publishers of fiction periodicals in the world? We will assume that

your story has been addressed to one of the nine magazines—*Popular*, *Ainslee's*, *People's*, *Top Notch*, *Love Stories*, *Detective Story*, *Western Story*, *Picture Play*, *Sea Stories*—published monthly, fortnightly, or weekly, as the case may be.



First it goes to Harry, the red-headed office boy, who passes it on to the editor to whom it is addressed. Manuscripts directed to no particular magazine are read by a special reader, but it is always well to send your story to the magazine to which you think it would be most suited. If, however, you wish your story handed over to other magazines in the group, in the event of its being rejected by the first, the editor will gladly do so if you inclose a note requesting it.

All manuscripts reaching the Street & Smith offices are carefully entered in an immense book with the date, title, and name of the author. This system is an effectual guarantee against the loss of manuscripts or undue delay in giving a decision upon them. After the editor has opened your envelope he glances first at the name in the corner of the manuscript. If it is familiar to him and if he happens to be in need of the kind of story you write, he may read it at once. Otherwise it will probably go into a box labeled "To be Considered," and there it will have to take its turn. If the box is full, you may have to wait two weeks for a reply, exclusive of the time it takes in the mails.

While several of the Street & Smith magazines will take a detective story, it is obviously useless to send a tale of that type to, for instance, *Sea Stories* or *Picture Play*. Each magazine has a policy which the author can easily ascertain by reading several numbers.

**D**OES each and every editor read everything that is submitted to him? No; for it would be impossible. Too much material comes in for him to read individually. He has an associate editor, maybe two or three, who have the authority to read and discard. There is generally one person who does the "weeding," that is, throwing the hopeless material into a box marked "To be Returned." Into this class come the unskilled person who thinks the story of his life is quite as interesting as anything he has seen in print, stories written on soiled paper, stories from young people who have the "itch," stories from those who are slightly demented or have a mental aberration of some kind. Fully sixty per cent of the material submitted is impossible.

After the weeds have been weeded out, the "likelys" are passed on to the associate editor. In none of Street & Smith's offices is the round-table discussion conducted. The associate editor reads your story, and if he likes it he writes a brief summary of its perfections and defects, and hands it to the editor. If the editor doesn't like it he will turn it over to someone else on the staff and finally get a consensus of opinion. In this way he will often buy a story he doesn't like himself, but which he thinks will probably be popular with his readers.

Besides the associate editor, there is the person who merely "edits"; that is, corrects punctuation, spelling errors, and sees that the story "hangs together," that there are no "holes" or discrepancies in it. If your hero has blue eyes on the first page, he must have blue eyes all the way through the story; if his name is Jones, he must continue to be Jones to the end of the story. Too, the person who edits must have a sharp and retentive memory for figures and dates; he must watch the time element, something which the author sometimes overlooks. Eradicating grammatical errors and seeing that nothing of a libelous nature gets into the magazine also make part of the copy-reader's job.

Right here a word may be said of the effect of material that is sent in carelessly typed on cheap and often soiled paper. If the writer could only visualize the psychological reaction which bad copy has on the editor, copy-reader, and all who handle his manuscript, he would probably be more painstaking with his manuscript. It is amazing to see how many writers are careless in this respect. A good story will often sell in spite of the way it is typed, but sooner or later the author will wonder why his manuscripts meet a chilly reception. The writer becomes unpopular with the editorial staff because he makes the same errors week in and week out. The copy-reader complains to the editor, and one day, when the editor isn't feeling too well and happens to pick up a manuscript badly typed, badly punctuated, and slovenly thrown together, he is going to turn it down flat. The composing room must also be considered, for complaints often go to the man higher up, and sometimes the copy is so poor it is impossible to edit properly.



After your story is "set up," it comes back to the editorial department in galley proofs. If the copy-reader has failed to do his job thoroughly and there are many errors in the proofs, the line or paragraph, as the case may be, has to be reset. If there is much resetting to be done the foreman of the composing room is apt to complain to the business manager, and so it reacts eventually on the editor.

Back to the composing room go the galley proofs, to reappear in the editorial offices as "page proofs." Even a mistake overlooked in the galley proofs will often be pounced upon in these last pages. Then the man in the composing room pats himself on the back. An occasion of this kind occurred recently. It escaped the editor and copy-reader, but was triumphantly discovered by the proof-reader. The author had the clock in the Metropolitan Tower striking sonorously the midnight hour when it only *flashes* after ten o'clock. Too, there is sometimes a "line over." This means that somewhere a sentence has to be "cut," sometimes a whole paragraph, when it occurs at the end of the story. On the whole, "editing" is a serious and punctilious, and often a thankless job.

**T**HE editors themselves are all a most amiable and approachable lot, and they are nearly always in the market for material.

Charles Agnew MacLean, editor in chief, when he isn't wistfully trying to find a story as good as "The Prisoner of Zenda," can wax very enthusiastic on the science of pugilism. An air of generosity surrounds him. He has a rather large mouth, a prominent nose, frank-looking eyes, and it is said that *Popular* pays the highest rate of the Street & Smith publications.

Miss Helen L. Lieder, of *Ainslee's*, although she lives in Brooklyn, likes high-brow literature, and is well posted on the moderns and the classics. She is trying to get away from the flippant type of fiction, but is anxious to obtain sophisticated stories of interest to women.

It would be hard to guess how old the editor of *Top Notch* is, but he looks like a veteran, with his battleship jaw, his confident attitude, and if you should happen to have a funny story to tell him, his eyes light up before you can get to the humor-

ous climax. He gives you the impression of having heard all the funny stories there are to tell. He always relishes a joke. But mention Robert Louis Stevenson and you'll see his eyes brighten. An ardent admirer of Robert Louis is Henry W. Thomas. Arthur E. Scott, his assistant, writes poetry on the side and—murmur it low—plays rather a canny poker hand. He is only six feet seven in his stockinged feet.

Frank E. Blackwell, editor of *Western* and *Detective*, was for several years a newspaper man. He has a pear-shaped head, almost bald, and isn't sensitive about it. He dignifies a derby, and if destiny hadn't designed him for an editor, he might have been a detective. This is the feeling he gives, but, outside of delving into detective and Western yarns, he is chiefly interested in horses. He lives out on Long Island, and at the mention of the equine his ears shoot back and an alert gleam dances in his eyes.

A. L. Sessions, once editor of *Ainslee's* and now editor of *People's*, has been with the firm twenty years. He is a scholarly, gentle-appearing man, who would put a penny in a blind man's can just as graciously as he would greet a prospective contributor. He is always ready to assist anyone who wants to verify a quotation from Shakespeare, and owns the only reference book of that kind in Street & Smith's.

Miss Anita Fairgrieve, whose name might be fictional, but is not, just as her hair might be henna'd only it isn't necessary, is editor of *Love Stories*. She is very much interested in baseball.

Last, but not least, Charles Gatchell, of *Picture Play*, who, when he isn't finding out all about a famous picture star's present, past, and future, is something of an artist. He is married, and his wife, Fannie Kilbourne, sells a story every little while to *The Saturday Evening Post*. Lucky man! I've met his wife.

**C**ONTACT with editors is often a great help to writers; moreover, editors like to get in personal touch with their contributors. Very little formality is observed at Street & Smith's. All the aspiring author has to do is to inquire of a face at the window for the editor. If the editor knows of you indirectly, or if you have sold him or want to sell him a story, he will be glad to

meet you, or send someone almost as influential as himself to consult you. If you have a pleasing personality, there is no doubt that a personal interview is of great value. Street & Smith pay promptly for all material purchased. Checks are mailed out every Friday without fail. It might also be helpful for the writer to know that Street & Smith punctuate and spell according to Mr. Webster.

An illuminating story as regards a personal interview is told of Mr. Thomas, the editor of *Top Notch*. A very young author once asked Mr. Thomas what kind of a story he wanted. Mr. Thomas explained patiently and to the point, and added a number of don'ts for the benefit of the prospective contributor.

"Don't write a morbid story," he cautioned among other things. "Don't write a story with an ambiguous ending. Don't write an unpleasant sex story." And so on and so forth.

The young author went hopefully on his way, and a few days later he mailed a story to the editor. Still a few days later he appeared in the Street & Smith offices and inquired about its fate.

"Won't do," declared Mr. Thomas with the brusqueness that sometimes masks his inherent kindliness.

"But I observed all your don'ts," protested the crestfallen author.

"I should have added one more," was Mr. Thomas's reply. "Don't send me a rotten story."

## Stumbling-Blocks of Authorship

By James Knapp Reeve

*First of a Series of Short Discussions Based on Long Experience as  
Author, Publisher and Critic*

EVERY once in a while some writer asks me how he or she shall determine the price to put upon a manuscript when offering it for editorial consideration and purchase. It may seem rather amazing to advise one to put no price at all upon a thing—presumably of value—that is offered for sale. But let us consult the great Cham of English literature, Dr. Johnson: When Goldsmith complained of the beggarly sum that he had received for "The Deserted Village," Johnson said that it was quite right that the amount of payment for a literary production should be left to the publisher. It was he who must take the financial risks. If a failure, he would presumably lose his investment, if a success, he would profit. And the author, in case of failure, would lose his work. If a success, he would gain in reputation, to the end that his future productions would have correspondingly increased value in the eyes of the publishers.

So, those three little words, "At usual rates," in the upper right-hand corner of the first page of your manuscript are all that will be needed (and even these are unnecessary) to insure fair dealing.

Editors, although it is difficult for some

writers to believe this in face of a steady stream of rejected manuscripts, are the most honest, considerate, and liberal chaps in the world. They have a fellow-feeling for the writers who send their wares broadcast, and are only too glad when they can write letters of encouragement and appreciation, or better still, send a check in payment. And this check will always be based upon certain fundamentals. One: The character and financial and literary standing of the publication. Two: The character and literary quality of the contribution. Three: The value of a contribution of just that sort to a periodical of just that standing. There you have in brief the entire scheme upon which the payments for contributions are figured out.

OCCASIONALLY a writer asks how he may protect himself from having his story or article, or the ideas contained therein, appropriated in the offices where it is submitted. My only answer to this is that one who has so little faith in human nature as to consider this hazard would better keep his manuscript safely at home, tightly under lock and key. I confess I have not much patience with such over-careful souls.

Few authorities on the short-story are accorded greater homage by students everywhere than Professor Walter B. Pitkin of the Columbia School of Journalism where, with his associate, Mr. Thomas H. Uzzell, he conducts a short-story clinic. Professor Pitkin is author of "Writing the Short Story" (Macmillan) and other authoritative works, as well as of fiction. Other of his articles on short-story technique have been promised to STUDENT WRITER readers.

# How To Evolve Story Ideas

## *Introduce Business Efficiency Into Your Collection of Raw Material for Fiction—A Note- Filing System Outlined*

By Professor Walter B. Pitkin

**M**OST struggling writers who fail do so, not because they are not good artists and cannot write, but because they haven't patience for the details of their task. They are not willing to put into their work the same efforts at system and organization which an ordinary business man knows he has to put into his work, if he means to succeed. One such important responsibility is the collection of raw material.

The saddest sight I know of in the literary world is of such a one sitting for hours chewing a pencil or staring blankly at his typewriter, "waiting for an inspiration." Gillman Hall, one of the best-known fiction editors New York has ever had and the discoverer of O. Henry, once said that the most trying of his experiences was to have struggling writers come to his office, pace the floor in despair, tearing their hair and exclaiming, "Oh, if I just had a good plot!" Such writers were devoid of a common-sense understanding of this problem of story ideas. There is just as much sense in their conduct as there would be in a builder who should sit on a vacant lot, crying aloud to heaven to send him bricks and plaster!

Creative imagination, of course, plays a large part in the actual writing of copy from plot outlines, but it would surprise you to know that not one successful story in a thousand is the work of pure imagination. The great majority of successful writers secure their ideas as the result of an organized patient effort to collect concrete mate-

rial from every possible source. Thus most of them solve the difficulty of securing raw material. The one solid and enduring basis of fiction is fact. The great world of average readers much prefers tales built around facts, and real character types. The way to get hold of good story ideas is to go after them. They do not come from gazing at a typewriter, smoking innumerable pipes, nor from a particular kind of food or any sentimental abracadabra. This work demands not one day or one month, but years of effort. It is your business problem.

**I** WANT to give you some hints as to how to handle this problem in the professional manner. I cannot lay down hard-and-fast rules, of course, since each writer will necessarily work out the details of his own system. All working systems for handling literary material, however, have something in common. They all tend to bring elementary order into your efforts. Let me merely suggest the working principles upon which you can and should proceed.

1. Get the habit of always looking for material, no matter what else you are doing. Moliere, you remember, said: "*Je prends mon bien on Je le trouve*"—"I take what I want where I find it." You must do the same. Do not worry so much about being original. Expend your worry rather in portrayal of people you actually see in dramatic situations. The more accurate you are in this respect, the more original you will be.



2. Give up the idea at once of trusting to your memory as a storehouse for literary material. Transfer the whole burden, as the business man does, to an orderly set of files. While filing systems such as are used in offices are far the best equipment for this purpose, and the kind you will ultimately use if you keep on, a very satisfactory beginning may be made by the use of large manila envelopes, or even the old-fashioned pasteboard filing boxes.

Now I suggest that you divide these files into two general divisions: (1) plot material and plots; (2) miscellaneous copy. The first of these divisions may be subdivided into:

- (a) *Plot material.*
- (b) *Plot germs.*
- (c) *Complete plots.*

Now each of these divisions you will naturally wish to divide into many subdivisions. What these subdivisions will be I cannot say, but it will depend upon the sorts of people and stories you are particularly interested in. I have found it very satisfactory to have the one for plot material and plot germs and for miscellaneous copy, and to subdivide them in general under titles which cover the whole field of literary material pretty thoroughly, as follows:

- (1) *Complications: Data which might produce stories built around some unusual occurrence.*
- (2) *Characters: Data which might produce stories depending for their effect upon characters.*
- (3) *Settings: Notes for story background and local color, etc.*
- (4) *Themes: Ideas, bits of philosophy and notions about life in general, around which plots might be conceived.*

3. This set of files should always be kept accurate. As it is built upon and you add more subdivisions, you should let these grow in your mind also, so that as soon as you come upon a good idea or make a jotting in your note-book you will know at once where to put it when you face your files at the end of the day.

**R**EAD the newspapers—as many as possible—daily, clipping out striking and suggestive incidents, filing these away in your section for plot material. Into this

section also should go miscellaneous notes from your note-book, scraps from books and letters, jokes, anecdotes, quotations, poems, photographs and every conceivable record of information about human beings and their conduct.

You should gather all such items without concern as to how you will translate them into tales. You will not be able to do this with one item out of a hundred, and you should never worry if the story idea does not occur to you. The main thing for you is to get the idea where it belongs in your file of plot material. Rarely do events and persons occur in real life in the dramatic situations which they need to succeed as fiction. It is a fortunate thing for you that this is so. If every news-story were a good short-story, then your occupation would be gone.

Now as to your plot germs: By this term I mean the first working up of the material gathered as above. Some writers use large plain cards for this purpose, keeping them in a card-index. They may just as well be written out on ordinary sheets of paper and kept in the same form as plot material.

Days will or should come when you will be curious to read over the plot material you have put away. Your mind may be in a very inventive mood. In going over your raw material you will be surprised to see how quickly stories are suggested; sometimes they will flash into being on merely reading over an ancient note or clipping. If the process is halted, you will often find that the plot can be completed by simply pulling out more material. You may find an excellent dramatic situation in your hand, but the characters may be vague and indistinct. A brief search among your character notes and clippings, and presto! there are the lady and gentleman standing forth, ready to greet you.

**A**S soon as your characters, situations and settings shape themselves together into story form, they should be immediately transferred to your plot-germ cards or sheets of paper. If the original anecdote is in the shape of a clipping, paste this on a corner of the plot-germ card, and then at one side make cross-references to your plot-material files where the necessary other ingredients of your story may be found. Thus



you will take practical advantage of the cross-reference system used in the ordinary business office. And the value of your files depends in large measure upon the care and detail with which you work up your cross-references. The more the better.

If, in working up your plot-germ cards, a plot is completely formed in your mind, then you should write it out at once in at least the form of a brief outline. This outline, if you do not wish to write the story at once, should be stored away in the third section of your plot division, that for completed plots.

4. The systematic production of what I call "miscellaneous copy" for the fourth main division of your files is one of the most important pieces of advice I can possibly give you. By this I mean to suggest the very great value of writing many experimental sketches of men and events and scenes suggested by the best of your clippings. The great value of this kind of work depends precisely upon the fact that you are not attempting to follow any definite plot. The essence of this performance is spontaneity.

You go to a play and come home throbbing with a new emotion. There flashes into your mind a scene which will produce that emotion. As soon as you get home, sit down at your typewriter and write out that scene, with all the fine frenzy you are capable of. Let it run to any length you choose. You attend a wedding or a funeral, or visit a friend; you see a thrilling baseball game; you propose to your best girl; you dream of your mother; you meet someone you admire or hate intensely—every such experience which does not result in a piece of spontaneous writing may be irretrievably lost to you as a writer. How great the loss is I cannot tell you. Each such experience should net a piece of writing to go in its proper place in your miscellaneous copy.

Your first attempts to make such sketches will be disappointing. You will not at once sense their possible use for stories you can sell, and you may grow discouraged. You will not see how they can be carried bodily into any story. You will find it necessary to rewrite them completely. Nevertheless this practice is valuable, and for two reasons:

(1) It cultivates facility in writing, and makes you more keen in delineating

character—a supremely important matter.

(2) It often yields many rich touches in characterization and plot developments which you could not conceivably secure by your own unaided imagination.

Take the pianist as your model, and you will know what I mean. No musician becomes proficient at the keyboard until he has mastered his finger exercises, so that the actual manipulation of the keys is more or less automatic, and he can focus his attention on expression. Just so you will not progress very far until you have written so much and can write so easily that you will be able to center your attention on the effect you wish to produce. So—on with the finger exercises!

5. Every ambitious story-writer should conduct regularly some field work. I have never known a literary worker who could not profit very greatly by it. Field work means just what it says—the deliberate collecting of events, scenes and characters by direct observation of men and affairs. The difference between this work and the ordinary note-taking I have suggested above is that you send yourself out on an assignment to learn something about human nature in exactly the same way a newspaper reporter goes forth to pick up information about some current event. Your work should be carried on, not with an eye to the daily print, but rather with a view to gathering story material. It is your one and only sure method of keeping in touch with the real world, and with the tendencies of taste and thought of your prospective readers. Most really great writers have done much work of this kind. The note-books of men like Robert Louis Stevenson show that great energy was devoted to it and indicate the richness of its yield.

THE master story-writer is a master psychologist, whether he knows it or not. Become therefore an amateur psychologist at once. Go into the business of philosophizing about the things you read in the newspapers. Discover for yourself whether they are the truth. Form opinions. Test your opinions by concrete observation. Express your opinions and record the answers you get. Take notes about the behavior of people you meet. Write out this behavior, and test it out on your suggestions or hints of them. Incidentally you

will discover an increased interest in work of this kind if you conduct a course of reading in psychology and the remarkable new applications which are being made of it every day.

But I am now being led into another and equally interesting field. All I wish to urge upon you here is the practical wisdom of putting over the burden of memory to a modern business-office device. I want you to realize that gathering raw material is as important a department of the writer's job as it is of any other job. After some months of persistently following the work

I have here suggested you will see your own powers of observation growing stronger and more accurate. Instead of being without story ideas, you will find yourself with more complete plots than you have time to write. Many writers who have carried out the suggestions I am giving you actually find it profitable to sell their plots to other writers.

Practice makes perfect here as everywhere else, and to perfect your skill in detecting story possibilities in real life is to advance you a very long way on the road to real success.

## History Repeats Itself

*Winner of the Chicago Daily News Scenario Contest  
\$10,000 Prize Was a Product of Specialized  
Education in Screen Writing*

**By Frederick Palmer**

*President of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, Los Angeles*

**H**ISTORY, as someone has remarked before, has a habit of repeating itself. Possibly the reason is that history is merely a record of the progress of mankind, and that this progress, in every period, has been dependent upon sharply defined fundamental principles. One of these principles is that nothing worth while can be achieved without persistence.

This consideration brings us into the world of art; and here it may be weighed in relation to photoplay writing in particular.

At the risk of causing half my readers to arise and shout, "Old stuff!" I desire to state that the persistent student—if he is possessed of ordinary ability and willingness to learn technique—will eventually forge ahead of any professional writer who allows himself to fall into the rut of laziness, or become so obsessed with ideas of his own importance that he refuses to study. Hard work will beat "inspiration." Everlasting perseverance will surpass all the talent in the world.

When the two qualities—persistence and talent—are combined, however, we have the ideal equipment for success. Given

these and it is only a matter of time before the student of photoplay writing—or any other profession, for that matter—will reach the top.

Every writer remembers the case of Lord Byron. Discouraged, almost on the point of suicide, because none of the many poems he had written had received favorable recognition, he "awoke one morning," quoting his own words, "and found himself famous." Suppose, however, that Lord Byron had given up the struggle in those dark early years; suppose he had never written "Childe Harold," but had passed up the idea as mere useless endeavor, which would avail him nothing!

Suppose that Guy de Maupassant, after a few score of his stories had been mercilessly criticized and thrown into the wastebasket by his instructor, had quitted the world of literature; suppose that Wagner, with forty unproduced operas on the shelf, had turned away from the composition of music in disgust and had entered other—apparently more lucrative—fields!

Genius, you may rely, cannot be "downed." But I maintain that neither Lord Byron, de Maupassant nor Wagner

was a genius—unless we mean by the term one who is willing to pay a great price to achieve fame in his chosen art. It is quite probable that there have been many writers who, had they been willing to work as hard and as long, might have surpassed de Maupassant in mastery of the short-story. Men who might have produced poetry equal to "Childe Harold" have gone down to their graves unknown because, long since, they had quit "trying." And, despite the excellence of Wagner's operas, who can say that others, not less powerful and beautiful, have not been conceived in the brain of some real genius who lacked the perseverance to acquire sufficient technique for transferring them to paper?

This is a generation of cynicism. Fully fifty per cent of the unsuccessful men and women of today, if asked, will tell you that the time-worn principles of success have long since been turned topsy-turvy; that "pull" has placed most of the big professional and business men at the top of the heap; that the unknown has little or no chance in the world of authorship.

It is refreshing to learn now and then of someone who, by sheer perseverance and hard work, has climbed from obscurity to success in his or her chosen profession. The Byrons, the de Maupassants and the Wagners are not all dead—no more than are the universal laws underlying their achievements.

**D**OWN in the hamlet of Apalachicola, Florida, lives a young woman, Miss Winifred Kimball, who, not many days ago, proved this argument so conclusively that the story of her success should be heralded throughout the country as an example of what persistency will do here and now.

Miss Kimball—whose pen-name is Lavinia Henry—has been announced as winner of the \$10,000 first prize in the Chicago *Daily News* Scenario Contest, which came to an end on March 31st. Her winning story, "Broken Chains," will immediately be produced by the Goldwyn Picture Corporation. Within a short time her name—hitherto unknown—will be almost a household word in thousands of homes; wherever, in fact, live those who attend motion-picture theaters. It can indeed be said that she awoke on the morning of April 1st and found herself famous.

As president of The Palmer Photoplay Corporation, whose course in photoplay writing Miss Kimball studied, and the methods of which she applied in constructing the prize-winning script, I cannot help but take considerable personal pride in her achievement. This satisfaction arises not so much from the fact that a student of our Educational Department has surpassed those employing other methods, as from the fact that Miss Kimball achieved her success in the face of discouragements that would have caused almost any other student to give up the struggle. One of our first students—enrolling in 1918, soon after the Palmer school was founded—Miss Kimball approached the study of screen-technique without any previous experience whatsoever. Story after story from her pen came into our advisory bureau, and went back to her with criticisms attached. Her advance was gradual, but none the less sure. And although, as I have since learned, in several instances the sale of a manuscript would have solved for her problems that might well have driven a less resolute person to despair, at no time did she evince a trace of bitterness in her letters, or show the slightest disposition to protest against the judgment of our critics. She has been, indeed, a veritable de Maupassant of the scenario-writing profession. And the prize photoplay—which won out against 27,000 others, many of them by veteran professionals—was not an accident. It was the finished product of a writer thoroughly schooled in the fundamentals of picture technique, the result of slow but certain evolution, and is undoubtedly the forerunner of many more meritorious screen-dramas by the same author.

**T**HE contest conducted by the Chicago *Daily News* has done much to encourage interest in photoplay writing. The Goldwyn Corporation, which has been in the foreground lately as seeker for new talent—both writers and actors—lent valuable assistance at all times; and the decisions made have met with approval on the part of all connected with the enterprise.

An interesting feature of the contest is that the prizes were almost equally divided between men and women. Another point worthy of note is the failure of professional fiction-writers to surpass those who write



only for the screen. William Wallace Cook and Anna Blake Mezquida are the only two well-known authors who landed "in the money," although hundreds of recognized fictionists competed. It might be remarked, in passing, that both Mr. Cook and Miss Mezquida have for some time been staunch advocates of special training in photoplay

technique, and have both made a thorough study of the subject. In fact, Mr. Cook stated in a recent magazine article that the study of the photodrama not only aided him in selling picture rights to his published material, but actually enhanced the value of his stories in the eyes of the magazine editors.

## "Three of a Kind"

*Wit-Sharpener Contestants Increase—Excellent Plot  
Solutions Submitted for April—New  
Problem for May*

MANY of the contestants in last month's Wit-Sharpener contest hold a high opinion of an artist's business ability, for they made Willoughby financially ruin the multimillionaires Jard. This is rather far-fetched. However, April's problem brought forth a number of excellent developments. Prizes were difficult to award, but were finally given to three solutions that were considered most dramatic, that preserved the best unity, and that were most satisfactorily developed in thought and according to the essentials of a short-story.

Interest is apparently increasing in the monthly contest, for an even larger number of solutions were received than heretofore. The April problem was:

*Estelle Hancock has not married because she has never found the man she can love. Now she learns that she is covertly referred to as an "old maid." Bitter that society should ridicule a person who has refused to marry except for love, she decides to wed the wealthiest man she can. When she becomes engaged to Arnold Jard, multi-millionaire manufacturer, she finds her ideal lover in Manfred Willoughby. But she marries Jard. Manfred, famous painter of women, deserts his life-work, as he can no longer find interest in women after his disappointment. He sets out to seek revenge by entering business and trying to ruin Jard. One evening, about a year later, Estelle comes to him, and . . .*

The solution which was awarded first place is well developed, and possesses significance beneath the surface irony. It would have to be written with reserve; but so written a number of good markets would be open to it. The solution is by Miss Marguerite Kerr of 60 Putnam Street, East Boston, Mass.

### *First Prize Winner*

As she enters his apartment, Manfred rushes to her and embraces her fervently, for business has sublimated but never subdued the temperamental artist. She submits quietly, and after his ardor is somewhat spent, he asks why she has come to him.

She tells him he is foolish to attempt to ruin her husband, and then begs him to return to his art, promising to back him with her patronage and Jard's money. Manfred asks whether she is prompted by her love for Jard or himself, and she replies "Neither," adding that she places creature comfort which Jard's money affords, before everything else, but the memory of her former passion for Manfred makes her wish to be his benefactor.

He agrees, and reopens his studio, financed by Jard, who seems anxious to please Estelle.

She sits for her portrait, and Jard eventually gets her to confess to a fondness for Manfred. He encourages her (to her amazement!), telling her that he wishes an heir to the Jard millions, and knows he is too old to make that a possibility! In due time Manfred's little girl is born, and Estelle's infatuation for Manfred grows stronger. Meanwhile Jard gives her grounds for divorce, sets aside a young fortune for the child, and resumes his former status of single blessedness with delight—for Estelle never had enough "pep" for him! And having freed himself from her without a sensational scandal that would affect his business, he feels well satisfied (as well he might, since they were all unethical persons). Estelle, having sidetracked love for money, doesn't get a great deal in Manfred, who deliberately turned his back on Art to champion Spite, and so this trio who violated ethics all around, turned out exactly as one would expect these uninteresting and commonplace persons would.

The solution winning second prize would make the kind of story that is popular with a number of magazines, especially the women's periodicals. There is no fault with its development, though it is not strikingly



original. Miss Nettie Rand Miller of Bradford, Vermont, is the author.

#### Second Prize Winner

Estelle Jard goes to Manfred Willoughby, her former lover. He persuades her to go away with him.

Scorning subterfuge, she tells her husband, defying him to stop her. She is piqued that he takes the news so quietly.

The automobile is announced to take her to the station. She discovers that she is being carried from the city.

Frightened, she appeals to the chauffeur, who proves to be her husband. They ride all night, but he refuses to divulge their destination. In the morning, he camps by the roadside and gets breakfast from the well-stocked limousine. She sees her husband in a new light and for the first time he interests her.

They motor to a point in Canada, where they take the train. Their destination is a camp in the Selkirk of British Columbia, where Jard, with some of the millions made in manufacturing, is financing a railroad to open a rich mining country. Here she is obliged to do the work for herself and husband, at first unwillingly.

The sister of Jard's chief engineer proves helpful.

Learning of the true personality of her husband, Estelle discovers that she loves him and that her feeling for Willoughby was infatuation. She thinks Jard loves the engineer's sister.

Comes a rival company, promoted by Willoughby, to get control of the railroad. Willoughby tries to institute a strike among Jard's men, but is frustrated by Jard.

A gigantic tunnel is nearing completion. Estelle hears that the tunnel is blown up and her husband is killed. Panic-stricken, she flies to the scene and finds her husband unharmed, but Willoughby, who blew up the tunnel, is severely injured.

Estelle and her husband are reunited and learn that their love for each other is the biggest thing in the world.

Third place was won by Miss Frances Colgan of 1926 Sixth Avenue, Los Angeles, California. Her solution has an unhappy ending, but the mood is good and the ending is effective.

#### Third Prize Winner

One evening, about a year later, Estelle comes to him, and entering the studio finds Manfred alone, seated in front of the unfinished portrait of herself. Melancholia has wasted him to a shadow.

Although not seeing Manfred for a year, Estelle has known his every move. His inglorious motive to seek revenge upon the man she married has shattered her ideal. Her visit was to tell him; but at the pitiable sight of Manfred, the purpose of her mission is routed.

Believing that Estelle has come to give herself to him, answering the call of her heart, Manfred becomes frenzied with joy. Estelle recognizes that her lover's mind is unbalanced, and her heart goes

out to him. She is the cause; the fault must be corrected.

She entreats him to abandon his attempts to ruin her husband, making clear how futile his schemes are. She professes her love for him, admitting the mistake she made in marrying Jard. Realizing the life she is living, she is going to free herself and restore Manfred's faith in women and her.

He is to go to Paris and resume his painting. She will tell her husband of her love, and gain her freedom to marry Manfred.

With the promise deep in his heart, he sails for France.

Estelle continues her life of luxury, forgetful of Manfred and her promise. Months elapse with no advances made for her freedom. She hates the thought of relinquishing her wealth. Her frail conscience overrides her selfishness, and she asks Jard to grant her her freedom.

Broken-hearted he agrees to her wish, swearing never to forgive her.

She packs and leaves, after writing Manfred that she is free and will soon be his.

That evening in the lonely hotel-room, reading the newspaper, Estelle's eyes are drawn to a small item in the cable-dispatches: "Manfred Willoughby, famous painter of women, found dead at his easel. The unfinished picture was the portrait of a beautiful American woman. \* \* \*"

The problem this month combines labor troubles with mystery and a touch of love. Entries to the contest increase each month and no doubt the number will be larger than ever this month. Keep trying!

#### WIT-SHARPENER FOR MAY

When Ralph Judson, selected by five hundred men employed at the Arden Steel Mills, fails to present his and his co-workers' demand for more sanitary and safe conditions at the mill, Mary Fernald, a girl of mystery who works at the factory, visits Boss Arden and lays before him the laborers' demands. Ralph has been trying to attain a higher social level than the laborers and he is relieved at not having to speak for the mill hands, but to excuse himself before them he condemns Mary as a meddler who has no doubt destroyed the chance of winning their demands. The next day, however, Mr. Arden sends notice that the factory will be remodeled at once. Ralph wins a mysterious promotion, and he finds himself falling in love with Mary. But she—

**PROBLEM:** In not to exceed 300 words, work out this plot situation to an effective conclusion.

For the best development submitted a prize of \$5.00 will be given; for the second best, a prize of \$3.00, and for the third best a prize of \$2.00. Winning outlines will be published next month.

**CONDITIONS:** The plot outline as completed must contain not more than 300 words, exclusive of the original problem. The outline must be legibly typed or written. It will be returned only by special request, when accompanied by stamped envelope for that purpose.

Manuscripts must be received by the 15th of the month for which the contest is dated. Address Contest Editor, THE STUDENT WRITER, 1835 Champa Street, Denver, Colo.

The old-time editor was accustomed to speak of the author's accumulation of dog-eared manuscripts as his "barrel." When a writer, after receiving a bit of encouragement, began to fire his brain-products at the editor by the dozens, he was likely to draw some such protest as this: "What are you doing—emptying your barrel at me?" Other associations cling to the word. For example, there was the fascinating "grab barrel" at the church fair. Almost anything is likely to come tumbling out of a barrel—which makes the title appropriate for this department. Readers are invited to assist the editors in keeping the barrel filled.

# The Barrel

## Out of Which Anything May Tumble

How long will the pigsty movement in American fiction endure? The current crop of novels—to which have been added a host of little magazines dedicated to realism and "advanced thought"—appears to be devoted to playing up all that is ugly in life. These are the only books noticed by the "revolt" school of critics, and apparently the only books read by the intellectuals. Moderate critics attribute the ugliness of American fiction to the signboards that clutter up all the vacant lots, to the raucous yells of newsboys selling sensational newspapers, and to the hurry and scurry of American commercialism. They say that the writers are simply reflecting their environment. Little hope can be held for American literature, they assert, until the signboard companies are put out of business and the newsboys muzzled.

But more than one of the critics, we are glad to say, views the wave of ugliness as preparatory to a morrow of beauty. In their belief, smart young men and women who dash out of the universities and write books idealizing morbid sinners, in a few years or decades—if they don't get so disgusted as to end their miserable existences by taking poison—will find something sweet and comely to write about. Many of us, fed up on "Main Streets," certainly hope that something like this will happen.

\* \* \* \* \*

Discussing the new school of realistic fiction, Lewis Joseph Vance recently said:

"It amounts to growing pains. Someone has said that photography is an art in itself, but that is no good reason why it should be exalted above painting. The photographic sort of writing is the easiest to do. It is working along the lines of least resistance. Therefore, don't do it."

The provincial government of Quebec is to encourage literature through cash prizes, a bill having recently been passed by the legislature providing three annual awards for authors. The highest is \$2500. The bill was sponsored by Athanase David, provincial secretary. For some years the government of Quebec has given encouragement to young writers of the province by buying large numbers of copies of their works.

\* \* \* \* \*

Payment for literary work today is infinitely better than it was forty years ago. Robert Louis Stevenson was paid twenty pounds for "Virginibus Puerisque," his first published volume of essays. Stevenson wrote at the time he made the contract of publication with Kegan Paul, "I could take Paul by the beard and knock his head against the wall. When aspiring authors who are offered \$50 for their third or fourth story are tempted to subject the editor to the same treatment, let them recall Stevenson and his twenty pounds.

\* \* \* \* \*

### THE CONTEST EDITOR DODGES A FEW WALLOPS

C. C. Cook of San Bernardino, Calif., after expressing his interest in the Wit-Sharpener contests and dropping the interesting information that he has sold two stories developed from the plot-problems, has this to say of the contest judges' decisions on the March developments:

"Your first prize winner would scarcely find favor with the film censors, as our hero proves unworthy of his title when he allows criminals to go unapprehended in order to protect himself. In the third prize winner identification was an easy matter, but stealing from the rich is as much a crime as pilfering from the poor, and as in the first instance the female crook is not only allowed her freedom, but she wins the heart and purse of our hero, whom we expect to right a wrong regardless of any petty sentimentality. Anyhow, from the censor's standpoint we could not allow these two prize winners to 'go and sin no more.'"

Readers should bear in mind that prizes are awarded each month to what we consider the best plot solutions submitted, whether or not they are

actually good enough for publication as stories. Sometimes the more logical developments are lacking in originality. One thing must be weighed against another in arriving at a decision. Mr. Cook's criticism on the ground of censorship is well taken if these solutions were to be adapted for the screen, but as short-stories their immoral or unmoral conclusions would not necessarily prevent their sale.—CONTEST EDITOR.

"There are a number of things in the plots awarded prizes for 'Dan Lamont's Dilemma' which I do not think would stand the test of actual life:

"In the second prize plot the solution of the mystery revolves around the identification of the photograph through the photographer. The names of sitters are given in confidence and no reputable photographer will divulge them. As several days have elapsed since Dan's operation, before he ships as a steward, isn't it rather far-fetched to suppose that he would land on the same boat with the fleeing Cleo?

"In the first prize solution we learn that Dan is searched at the railroad station. Do they do such things in large cities? I never heard of it—supposed suspects were taken to police office, but, presuming so, what criminal would ever expose the methods of smuggling gems, to a stranger on his word? How did she know he was not a detective?

"In the third prize solution the girl just appears without any solution as to 'Why,' and this version is even more complicated than 'The Mystery of the Yellow Room.' I think Mr. Wood would have quite a time explaining the matter, as modern houses are not so full of secret passages known to all the underworld as they might be."—CARROLL B. CLARK.

Mr. Clark's comments are well taken. However, with reference to the second prize winner it can be assumed that the name was obtained from a not too scrupulous photographer. Newspaper reporters frequently do get names from such sources. Dan was not supposed to be on the boat at the same time as Cleo, but later got passage on the same boat. The events of the first prize-winning solution are not as implausible as they may seem. Dan was not a stranger, as the "operation" was made for the very purpose that the crooks are able to carry out when he arrives at Minneapolis. If the reader keeps this in mind, I think the improbabilities of the solution are smoothed away. No doubt the third prize winner would have to use his ingenuity in explaining the girl's entrance to the room, but it is intimated that she was able to pick the lock of Dan's door.—CONTEST EDITOR.

\* \* \* \* \*

Winston Churchill, in a recent interview, outlined the result of three years' investigation in psychology. His observations offer writers much food for thought. He said that he believes that inward creative energy is the whole secret of living and that, given that, one's conduct will take care of itself. There is a conflict between primitive emotions and creative emotions, in which the latter must dominate, so Mr. Churchill thinks, if worth-while results are to be obtained. Artists, writers and composers of music who attempt to force themselves to do work are exercising their

### Detailed Criticism of Manuscripts

with suggestion of markets, by the author of "The Technique of Fiction Writing," of which one reader says: "The biggest single help that I have run across. Immediately after the first reading I waded into a short story, and a hundred dollar check from Munsey seemed to tell me that I had managed the thing." Short stories and articles, \$3; other matter by arrangement.

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primitive will, according to Mr. Churchill. If they will only relax and allow their creative emotions to come into play they will get a value out of creating which they will prefer to any other value on earth, he believes. And it is in this way that great works of art are produced.

\* \* \* \*

Letters like the following are always pleasing and they show the value to the wide-awake writer of a carefully conducted department like THE STUDENT WRITER'S "Literary Market Tips." We congratulate Mr. Lewis.

Dear Sirs:

Have been enjoying THE STUDENT WRITER. Will say I thank you for the notice of the "Perfection Oil Heater" contest, in which I won first prize, \$1000.

Yours very truly,

Fresno, Calif.

LAWRENCE LUSNI LEWIS.

\* \* \* \*

## REJECTION LETTERS

Several readers took kindly to the suggestion that they share their more interesting rejection letters anonymously with other writers. Two have been culled from those submitted, and are published for the light they throw on matters of editorial policy.

From Roland Holt, vice-president Henry Holt & Company:

"We are very sorry to have to write that the advice of our reader on this book is not very encouraging, though he says you do seem to get the humor of the office boys very well. If you are young and beginning writing, we would be glad to see further work from you, with a reference to this letter, but we think you need to take a good deal of time to do your best on it. Possibly, if you are willing to take suggestions, you would find helpful ones in Clayton Hamilton's 'Manual of the Art of Fiction,' \$1.50, published by Messrs. Doubleday, Page & Company. We also enclose, on the chance that you may find some of the books listed in it helpful, a list of recent fiction that we admire and think furnish excellent models for new authors."

From Harry Stephen Keeler, editor The Chicago Ledger:

"I regret that we cannot see our way clear to make you an offer for your novelette, but it is too much on the blood and thunder order to pass muster with us. Melodrama per se we have no objection to here, but there has to be dramatic plot to back it up. This story seems to be chiefly of the tale structure—the straight narration of events in a string—and this does not make for serial interest. We are always glad to see anything any writer may have to offer, although we are not always able to accept on account of that elusive factor—or rather its absence—serial interest."

\* \* \* \*

## SLIPS AND FLIPS

The Criticism:

Without the least intention of making H. Bedford-Jones the "goat" of your "Slips and Flips" column, I, too, am constrained to ask him a question. On page 60 of his fascinating book, "The Fiction Business," which THE STUDENT WRITER



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published, he speaks of "a novel by William James." Please ask him to recommend a good novel by this author—any one at all will do.

L. J.

Answer, by H. B-J.:

Gosh, boys, you've sure got me nailed to the mast! Don't shoot any more. I surrender. Did you ever fire a load of rock salt at your neighbor's cat and hit your own cat by mistake? That's how come. All right, let's have the agony over: I got the James boys twisted. That do? Thank you. Please omit flowers.

### THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS PHOTOPLAY CONTEST

The lessons brought out through the Chicago Daily News scenario contest are discussed by Frederick Palmer, screen-writing authority, elsewhere in this issue. The contest was of exceptional interest and importance, appealing to the majority of writers in America; 27,000 scenarios were entered. The full list of prize-winners and titles of their successful scripts follows:

*First Prize*, \$10,000—Miss Winifred Kimball, Apalachicola, Fla., "Broken Chains."

*Second Prizes*, \$1,000 *Each*—Albert D. Barker, Prospect street, West Bridgewater, Mass., "The Verdict of the Sea." Kent Curtis, Captiva, Fla., "The Quinn Millions for Millions of Quinns." Anna Blake Mezquida, 969 Pine street, San Francisco, Cal., "What the World Expects." P. H. Limberg, Fairmont, Minn., "Somebody's Mother." Elmer J. Allman, 950 North Laramie avenue, Chicago, Ill., "Lost—An Umbrella." Brianna Barrett, 9 Dresser street, Newport, Rhode Island, "Forever." Rose Cour, 827 Montrose avenue, Chicago, Ill., "The Gutter Orchid." Jennie R. Maby, 823 South Fourth avenue, Pocatello, Idaho, "The Woman Takes." Joseph F. Hook, Granger, Washington, "The Turning of the Worm." Dorothy Bronson, 233 Long avenue, Chicago, Ill., "The Mating of Marcella."

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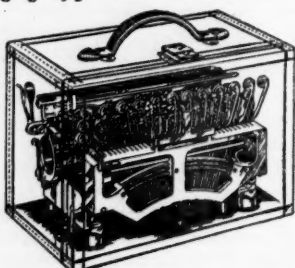
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from fifty-seven American magazines of various types, from the woman's and non-paying "artistic" magazines to the Big Four.

Other information in this year-book of the short-story will prove of direct value to the writer. About thirteen pages are given over to indexing articles on the short-story and writers of them which appeared in thirty-five magazines and newspapers during the year, October, 1920, to November, 1921. Every writer will be interested in the list of "distinctive" stories, in which several hundred stories are given special mention for merit. There is also a more exclusive list in which "honorable mention" stories are placed on the "honor roll."

Writers who are having their short-stories published will find in this year-book a means of preserving their stories, if they should come under Mr. O'Brien's favorable notice. The beginner will find twenty interesting stories of various types to read and study, as well as a fairly inclusive list of stories for supplementary reading. This book reveals what the magazines consider stories of merit, and affords a practical ideal toward which the writer can work. And he can feel that his effort in this class of fiction will not be too good for modern "commercial" magazines to buy.

*Cinema Craftsmanship.* By Frances Taylor Patterson. Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York.

Photoplay craftsmen will find this book a clear exposition of the mechanics of cinematic construction. The following subjects are treated in a direct, understandable manner: plot, characters, setting, adaptation, comedy. Furthermore, such practical matters as writing the synopsis for the photoplay market and a study of the market are given satisfactory treatment. A complete continuity, "Witchcraft," which won the Columbia University photoplay prize given by the Famous Players-Lasky Company is reproduced.

**HAVE YOU INHIBITIONS TOWARD WRITING?**

Let us analyze your writing troubles and suggest remedy. Write for "Craftsmanship"—a bulletin for writers. Sent free.

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*More Short-Stories Are Now Being Purchased by Magazines  
Than Ever Before*

## Today Offers the Fiction Writer's Greatest Opportunity

### ARE YOU PREPARED?

**N**EVER was the demand for short fiction as great as it is now. *The Metropolitan* has recently become an all-fiction magazine, *Everybody's* also now publishes only fiction; other magazines have changed to an all-fiction policy, and there are a number of new fiction periodicals. Consider the constant demand these magazines create for stories!

This is the day of brevity.

The short-story has a greater vogue and is more thoroughly an American form of art than since the time of Edgar Allan Poe. The writer who can produce salable short-stories has an assured position in life. No longer is he an attic-inhabiting creature, but a well-paid earner.

The aspiring fiction writer need not wade through difficult textbooks; he need not spend years in learning a great amount of theoretical technique. The science of short-story writing has been thoroughly analyzed by THE STUDENT WRITER editors. Popular type stories can be produced in a synthetic manner which is not the product of genius nor endless training, but of the intelligent grasp of certain fundamentals.

**THE STUDENT WRITER** educational department, after years of study of short-story technique, short-story methods of teaching, and of thousands of stories submitted for criticism by beginners and successful authors, has evolved a system of training in short-story writing.

It is a most simple, direct, and practical system. The student learns to write by writing, hardly aware that he is incidentally learning a great amount of necessary theory. He is given interesting assignments that compel attention and completion. By the aid of concrete examples, he is shown how to proceed, how to develop a story. Every step in

short-story construction is covered not only by brief, pithy lectures, but by cleverly devised assignments.

There is a type story.

The originators of **THE STUDENT WRITER'S SIMPLIFIED TRAINING COURSE IN SHORT-STORY WRITING** have found this type story. It forms the basis of the first division of lessons. There are other type stories and through these and original work required, the earnest student cannot fail to get a thorough understanding of the mechanics of short-story production.

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Enroll me as a student in your Simplified Training Course in Short-Story Writing, at the introductory price quoted, and send me the first division of lessons and assignments at once. I enclose—

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—OR—

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MR. THOMAS H. UZZELL, formerly Fiction Editor of *Collier's Weekly*, and associate and manager of Professor Walter B. Pitkin, announces that he is giving professional training in short story writing by personal correspondence to those who cannot come to New York to study with him. This announcement is made in the hope of getting in contact with writers of promise. It is intended only for those who are very much in earnest, and are willing to face the truth about themselves and their work. Inquiries will be gladly answered. Address:

**THOMAS H. UZZELL**  
**573 West 192d St., New York**

A special intensive summer course in plot-making will be conducted in New York by Mr. Uzzell in July.

## The Literary Market

(Continued from page 3)

*Caveat*, 625 Locust Street, St. Louis, Mo., is a new publication, "devoted explicitly to educational subjects." G. E. Merrick, editor, writes: "We will consider manuscripts which deal with home problems, legislation and economic questions which are written from an impersonal standpoint. Also use first-class, clean fiction on romance, adventure or mystery. Rates will be determined by editor after examination, and payment made on 20th of month following publication."

The Universal Film Manufacturing Company, 1600 Broadway, New York, offers \$100 each to newspaper men for acceptable stories, stating: "We are planning to make a series of two-reel films dealing with newspaper life. Don't try to write a movie story. We will attend to that. Write the best newspaper experience you ever contributed to your own paper. Or possibly the best newspaper story you know never got into the paper at all. Send that one, but change the names, dates and places. It may be that this will open up a new field for you." Address John C. Brownell, scenario editor.

*Forbes' Magazine* has moved from 299 Broadway to 180 Fifth Avenue, New York. B. C. Forbes, editor, writes that he is in the market for anecdotes and jokes "pertaining to some business man or business concern, or of a general business nature," confined within 150 words. Payment is on publication, a first prize of \$5.00 being awarded monthly, and the other skits used being paid for at \$1.50 each.

*True Story Magazine*, 119 W. Fortieth Street, New York, announces that it has installed a system whereby manuscripts will be considered promptly and report will be made without the long delays which have heretofore resulted to the dissatisfaction of contributors.

## Prize Contests

*McCall's Magazine*, 236 West Thirty-seventh Street, New York, offers a \$100 prize for the best letter suggesting a solution for a "tangled problem of human destinies" published on page 68 of the May issue. Letters should be addressed to Mrs. Winona Wilcox, care of the magazine, on or before May 10th. The problem is based on a published "confession" in which a correspondent tells of a love affair between herself and a married man. The question propounded is whether the wife is entitled to know of the affair.

*The American Magazine*, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York, for its current contest, offers prizes of \$20, \$10, and \$5 for letters within 400 words on "My Greatest Fear." The contest closes May 20th. "Make your story a definite anecdote," the contest editor requests. "If you overcame your fear, tell how you did it."

*The American School Citizenship League* announces an essay contest open to students of all countries and closing June 1, 1922. Two sets, known as the Seabury prizes, are offered, each set consisting of three prizes of \$75, \$50, and \$25.





## He Sold Two Scenarios the First Year

**T**HIS sentence from J. Leo Meehan's letter to the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, tells the whole story:

*"Within one year I have been able to abandon a routine life that provided me with a meal ticket and a few other incidentals for the infinitely more fascinating creative work of the photoplaywright."*

But it would not be fair to you to end the story there. It is interesting to know that a young man in an underpaid job was able to sell two scenarios and attach himself to a big producer's studio in one year; that a few months ago he was retained by Gene Stratton Porter to dramatize her novels for the screen. But if you have ever felt as you left a theatre, "Why, I could write a better story than that," you want to know just how Mr. Meehan went about it to become a successful photoplaywright in one short year.

He was doubtful when he enrolled, but he wrote that he was "willing to be shown." And with complete confidence in Mr. Meehan's ability, the Palmer Photoplay Corporation, whose test he had to pass before he was acceptable, undertook to convince him.

The rest was a simple matter of training. The Course and Service merely taught him how to use, for screen purposes, the natural story-telling ability which we discovered in him.

**You, too, may doubt your ability**

What the industry needs is good stories—stories that spring from creative imagination and a sense of the dramatic. Any person who has those gifts can be trained to write for the screen.

But, you say—just as Mr. Meehan said—how can I know whether I have that ability?

To answer that question is the purpose of this advertisement. The Palmer Photoplay Corporation will gladly apply to you a scientific test of creative imagination—the test Mr. Meehan passed—provided you are an adult and in earnest. And, notice this particularly, we shall do it free.

**Send for the Van Loan Questionnaire**

The test is in the form of a ques-

tionnaire prepared for the Palmer Photoplay Corporation by H. H. Van Loan, the celebrated photoplaywright, and Prof. Malcolm MacLean, former teacher of short story writing at Northwestern University. If you have any story-telling instinct, send for this questionnaire and find out for yourself just how much talent you have.

We shall be frank with you; have no fear. The Palmer Photoplay Corporation exists first of all to sell photoplays. It trains photoplay writers in order that it may have more photoplays to sell. It is not in business to hold out false promise to those who can never succeed.

With the active aid and encouragement of leading producers, the Corporation is literally combing the country for new screen writers. Its Department of Education was organized for one purpose and one only—to develop and produce the writers who can produce the stories. The Palmer institution is the industry's accredited agent for getting the stories without which production of motion pictures cannot go on.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation cannot endow you with the gift of story-telling. But we can discover it, if it exists, through our questionnaire. And we can train you to employ it for your lasting enjoyment and profit.

**We invite you to apply this free test**

Clip the coupon below, and we will send you the Van Loan questionnaire. You assume no obligation, but you will be asked to be prompt in returning the completed test for examination. If you pass the test, we shall send you interesting material descriptive of the Pal-

mer Course and Service, and admit you to enrollment, should you choose to develop your talent. If you cannot pass this test, we will frankly advise you to give up the idea of writing for the screen. It will be a waste of their time and ours for children to apply.

This questionnaire will take only a little of your time. It may mean fame and fortune to you. In any event it will satisfy you as to whether or not you should attempt to enter this fascinating and highly profitable field. Just use the coupon below—and do it now before you forget.

**T**HESE are the leaders behind the search for screen writing talent. They form the Advisory Council of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation.

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 C. Gardner Sullivan  
 Author and Producer  
 Allan Dwan  
*Allan Dwan Productions*  
 Lois Weber  
*Lois Weber Productions, Inc.*  
 Rob Wagner  
 Author and Screen Authority  
 James R. Quirk  
 Editor and Publisher *Photoplay Magazine*

Please send me without cost or obligation on my



part, your questionnaire. I will answer the questions in it and return it to you for analysis. If I

pass the test, I am to receive further information about your Course and Service.

**Palmer Photoplay Corporation**

Dept. of Education, S. W. 5  
 124 West 4th St., Los Angeles, Cal.

Name .....

Address .....

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The first set is open to students in normal schools and teachers' colleges, subject: "The Function of Education in the Promotion of International Understanding." The second set is open to seniors in secondary schools, subject: "The Essential Foundations of a Co-operating World." For information address Mrs. Fannie Fern Andrews' 405 Marlborough Street, Boston.

The *American Chamber of Commerce*, Mexico City, Republic of Mexico, announces the following poem contest: "Believing that no really beautiful poem has yet been written in English and dedicated to Mexico's great and world famous volcanoes, Ixtaccihuatl and Popocatepetl, we will award twenty-five pesos to the person submitting the best poem on these two peaks. Poems may be written in any style or meter, but the names of both volcanoes must be mentioned." Ixtaccihuatl means "the sleeping woman," and Popocatepetl means "big smoking mountain." Date of the closing of the contest has not been announced. All manuscripts should be forwarded to the organization and address named above.

*Topics of the Day Films*, Times Square, New York, offers \$100 each for the best articles on the subject, "How Can Business Be Improved?"

The *David C. Cook Publishing Company*, Elgin, Ill., offers \$200 in prizes for the best answers to the question, "Why is the class lesson discussion plan the right plan of teaching in the Sunday School class?" Leaflets explanatory of the contest, which closes June 15, will be sent by the C. D. Q. Answer Contest Editor. The company also has issued a call for entertainment features for special occasions, including Easter, Children's day, Rally day, and Christmas.

The *American Automobile Association*, 1108 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., offers \$25.00 for the best term for branding reckless automobile drivers—a term that will convey ridicule and opprobrium and become as popular as the term "jay-walker" applied to the careless pedestrian. Contest closes May 15th and the award will be made May 29th. Address the contest editor.

*Brief Stories*, 805 Drexel Building, Philadelphia, has discontinued its monthly contest for the best letter of criticism of a story appearing in the current issue of the magazine.

*Science and Invention*, 233 Fulton Street, New York, has several monthly prize offers. In the "How-to Make-It" department prizes of \$15, \$10 and \$5 are awarded each month for articles containing the most useful, practical, and original idea for accomplishing new things with old apparatus or old material. "The article need not be very elaborate, and rough sketches for illustration are sufficient." A new contest has been announced for articles on "Electricity on the Car." Monthly prizes of \$25, \$15, and \$10 will be awarded by the "Motor Hints" editor. Articles must not be longer than 200 words and should contain practical new hints made possible by the electric current. Non-prizewinners may be paid for at \$1.00 each. The magazine has discontinued its "Scientific Humor" department which formerly purchased scientific jokes at \$1.00 each.

## ***SWEEPING THE COUNTRY—This New Book on Fiction Writing by a Master of His Craft.***

Few could have written this book; they haven't the experience. And still fewer would have written it, thereby giving away their own secrets of literary craftsmanship.

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He has a score or more of published books to his credit; about a hundred book-length novels, as many novelettes, and some hundreds of short-stories. His daily average writing stunt is five to ten thousand words. Under pressure he has written a complete story of 25,000 words in a day. Ninety-nine per cent of all his written work has sold. You will find his book-length novels in magazines on the stands today.

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"When hard-boiled professional old-timers can get both enjoyment and profit out of a volume about writing fiction—as I have out of this one—its value to comparative tyros at story-building must be infinitely greater. There is more meat worth chewing and digesting in H. Bedford-Jones's **THE FICTION BUSINESS** than in any other book on the subject that has ever fallen into my hands."—**J. FRANK DAVIS.**

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"Having been through the mill myself I can appreciate keenly its value to the beginning writer. There has long been a need for just such a book from the pen of a practical man and I think your opus fills the bill more than adequately.

"**OCTAVUS ROY COHEN.**"

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- VII. The Deadly Sin.
- VIII. Story Construction—1.
- IX. Story Construction—2.
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## THE WRITER'S DIGEST

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Edited by J. BERG ESENWEIN

A Magazine of Real Help for all Who Write

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART says: "The Writer's Monthly looks awfully good to me. For years I have been telling beginning authors that there is nothing in the world so good for them as such a magazine. It puts them in touch with publications they would otherwise not think of. So many writers live away from New York, and since by the very nature of the work it must be done in solitude, it seems to me that a magazine coming in once a month is like hand-shakes from a fellow craftsman."

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## EXPERT TYPING

Please let our expert typists put your Mss. in neat shape. Typing, 50c a thousand words. Songs, poems, 1½c a line. Bond paper, including one carbon copy. Revision, 25c a 1000 words. Terms for marketing, 10 per cent. Ask for our great monthly prize contests.

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Ordinary Membership Fee, \$2.00 a year.

Sample copy and year book, mailed on receipt of 35 cents. Address, 308 35th St., Milwaukee, Wis.

## Some Photoplay Markets

NO published list of photoplay markets should be regarded by the intending contributor as more than a general guide. Numerous changes in the producing field are likely to occur between the time of gathering "tips" on the needs of the various companies and getting the information into the hands of readers. At least two of the companies listed in the December STUDENT WRITER were found to have moved or gone out of business within a few weeks after the statements of their scenario editors were published, although the canvass of their needs had been made but a short time before the article was put to press. Frederick Palmer, screen authority, who conducts THE STUDENT WRITER photoplay department, writes from Los Angeles:

"At the present time, stars are shifting from one company to another, and conditions are changing so rapidly that it is next to impossible to give reliable information as to where to sell stories. I do not think it would be best to name certain markets only to have them changed by the time your readers have finished and submitted their scripts. This condition will probably not prevail for any great length of time. \* \* \*

"This looks like a big year in motion pictures, as a large number of independent companies are being formed, and the big studios are planning to go ahead at full speed for the next few months."

Readers will realize the truth of Mr. Palmer's comment. Desiring to give such hints as are obtainable, for what they may be worth, we are supplementing our own market items by a statement of the requirements of some of the photoplay companies as given in the international year book number of *Editor and Publisher*. The information, it is asserted, was obtained from the executive heads of the concerns, and probably is still correct in the main.

Blazed Trail Productions, Inc. J. L. Russell, president; L. Case Russell, scenario editor, 19 Elm

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Your Own Western Writers!

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**Christie Film Company.** Al Christie, President; Frank Conklin, scenario editor, 6101 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, Calif. Two-reel situation comedies.

**Educator's Cinematograph Company.** Alfred H. Saunders, president; Alfred H. Saunders, scenario editor, 70 Fifth Avenue, New York. Strictly pedagogical. Payment on acceptance.

**Fox Film Corporation.** William Fox, president; Hamilton Thompson, scenario editor, Fifty-fifth Street and Tenth Avenue, New York. Types of stories that will suit our stars; fast action, outdoor material (Western) for Tom Mix and Charles Jones; romantic dramas with love interest well developed for the others." Payment upon acceptance.

**Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.** Samuel Goldwyn, president; New York editor, Eugene Mullin, 469 Fifth Avenue. Studio editors, Paul Bern, Ralph Block, Clayton Hamilton, Culver City, Calif. Needs not given.

**Ince Studios.** Thomas H. Ince, president; John B. Ritchie, scenario editor, Culver City, Calif. "Strong dramas of universal appeal suitable for feature productions; also clever comedy dramas for male lead." Payment when the story is accepted.

**International Film Service Company.** W. R. Hearst, president; Verne H. Porter, scenario editor, 127th Street and Second Avenue, New York. "Buys only published stories and stage plays. Big themes lending themselves to big productions." Payment on acceptance.

**Metro Pictures Corporation.** Marcus Loew, president; Jasper Ewing Brady, scenario editor, 1540 Broadway, New York. "Any good story." Payment on acceptance.

**Post Picture Corporation.** C. E. Elliott, vice-president; H. J. Ruth, scenario editor, 527 Fifth Avenue, Room 508, New York. "Simple two-reel human-interest, full-of-action stories. Preference for those that can be filmed outdoors." Payment at once.

**Romayne Super Film Company.** H. Y. Romayne, president; Golden Maxwell, scenario editor, Culver City, Calif. "When in the market for manuscripts we purchase Westerns and comedies generally." Payment on acceptance.

**B-C Pictures.** R. S. Cole, editor, 780 Gower Street, Los Angeles, Calif. Society drama, comedy drama.

**Selznick Pictures.** 318 E. Forty-eighth Street, New York. "Uses published plays, books, original scenarios, magazine stories, newspaper stories, etc." Payment on consummation of purchase.

**Universal Film Company.** John C. Brownell, scenario editor, 1600 Broadway, New York. "Desires detailed synopsis—almost as complete as a novel—characterization, atmosphere, plot, action—and stories which suit our stars only."

## THUMB-NAIL CRITICISMS

### AT PIN- POINT PRICES

Many want advice on their manuscripts, but don't care to pay the rates demanded by most professional critics for extended service. My thumb-nail criticisms—the only ones of their kind—will meet their needs.

I read your story, photoplay, article, poem—write an opinion on its salability, outstanding faults, and good features, and give a good list of probable markets.

Brief—yes, but to the point. Some say my few-word flashes are more illuminating than pages.

#### Example of a thumb-nail criticism:

Dear ———:

Your story begins enticingly and reads well, but the conclusion is disappointing. Remedy this by showing how Dykman took the news of his rival's promotion. Page five—note lapse of viewpoint. Plot, fairly original. Character drawing, good, especially the hero. Punctuation, careless.

Markets: Blue Book, 36 So. State St., Chicago; Top Notch, 79 7th Ave., New York; Double Dealer, 204 Baronne St., New Orleans; Brief Stories, 805 Drexel Bldg., Chicago; Leslie's, 627 W. 43d St., New York; Black Mask, 25 W. 45th St., New York; Chicago Ledger, 500 N. Dearborn St., Chicago.

By all means reserve the motion picture rights. The story has good movie points.

Yours, TOM THUMB, JR.

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